



MACo

NEWS

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MACo HEALTH CARE TRUST CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY

By Owen P. Voigt, MACoHCT Marketing Representative

The MACo Health Care Trust (MACoHCT) is officially one year old and going strong! MACoHCT had a very successful year of operations both in terms of growth and finances.

As of July 1, 2006, MACoHCT has grown from its original founding members of **Petroleum, Musselshell, McCone, Powder River, Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Granite, Valley and Treasure Counties** to 15 counties, a county hospital, a water district and 18 conservation districts including the state conservation district office. During the year Glacier and Carbon County, the Montana Association of Conservation Districts and the Granite County Hospital all joined the Trust. MACoHCT bid several counties during the July renewal period and 5 new counties joined. They are **Big Horn, Custer, Meagher, Park and Wibaux Counties**. We welcome them into the Trust and have benefit meetings planned with all of their employees before the end of summer. We are now nearly 1300 lives and growing!

Our customer service staff has been busy. MACoHCT has worked hard to be the Montana counties' health benefits plan-of-choice by establishing appropriate and actuarially sound reserves and outstanding service to the member/owners of the Trust.

MACoHCT staff will be meeting with all member counties this fall to inform the commissioners and staff how the individual county members and the Trust are doing from a plan perspective including membership and finances. MACoHCT staff will also be available in each of the member county locations to answer any claims or benefit questions from all county employees, retirees and persons on COBRA.

MACoHCT is set up much like the MACo JPIA and JPA programs. Montana Counties need and deserve the MACoHCT to assure them they are getting the most for their hard earned tax dollars.

Health care is very expensive. Did you know MACoHCT can offer choices from several plans, giving each employee the ability to pick a plan that is just right? Let MACoHCT show how this can not only save the county money, but can provide a better plan with the best service your county has ever had from a health benefits organization!

For more information, visit the MACoHCT website at
<http://www.macohct.com/MACO>

or call 866-669-6428 (toll free)
or 406-444-5163 (Helena area).

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SUPREME COURT EXPANDS THE RIGHT TO SUE FOR ON-THE-JOB RETALIATION

*By Jack Holstrom
Personnel Services Administrator*

In Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co. v. White, No. 05-258, forklift operator Sheila White had won \$43,500 in damages and medical expenses from a federal jury, which found that her boss responded to her complaints about co-workers' sexual harassment by transferring her to a more arduous job and suspending her for 37 days without pay. She was later reinstated and awarded back pay.

The railroad had argued that the law requires a link between the alleged retaliation and a permanent employment decision such as termination or a pay cut. In a ruling that had the full support of eight justices, the United States Supreme Court disagreed and held that employees may collect damages even in some cases where the punishment did not involve getting fired or losing wages. Justice Stephen G. Breyer wrote that under the circumstances, the railroad's actions would have been enough to deter a reasonable employee from making a charge in the first place. This, he wrote, is the proper definition of illegal retaliation. Breyer wrote that even refusing to invite a worker to lunch can be retaliation, if it is "a weekly training lunch that contributes significantly to the employee's professional advancement." He also concluded that even some actions that take place outside the workplace can

qualify as retaliation, if they are serious enough. To illustrate he cited a previous case in which an employer had filed a false criminal charge against an employee who had complained about discrimination.

The decision opens the door to claims based on actions that, before today, employers would not have suspected were actionable. It adopts the relatively pro-plaintiff rule that was previously adopted by the circuit court of appeals based in Chicago and Washington D.C. and rejected the more restrictive standard that had prevailed in most other regions of the country.

TENTATIVE August District Meetings

- Wed., Aug. 16 Districts 6 & 7 – Billings
MetraPark – Yellowstone Room
9:00 a.m.
- Tue., Aug 22 Districts 1, 2 & 3 – Jordan; 10:00 am
- Wed., Aug 23 Districts 4 & 5 – Chinook; 10:00 am
Blaine County Library
- Thu., Aug 24 Districts 10 & 11 – Hamilton; 10:00
- Fri., Aug 25 Districts 8, 9 & 12 – Livingston; 10:00
No host lunches will be available.
- The tentative agenda items for these meetings are:
1. Minutes of previous meeting
 2. Resolutions
 3. Nomination of MACo 2nd VP
 4. Election of District Chairs
 5. Interim Committees & Legislature
 6. Insurance Trust Updates
 7. Vendor & Sponsorship Program

To add agenda items, contact the District Chair.

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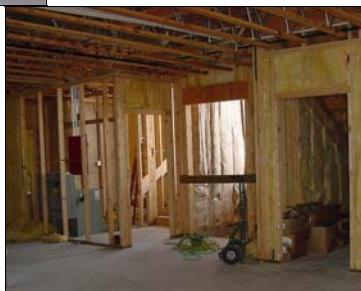
Friday
July 7, 2006
Backside



Friday, July 14, 2006
Front of Building



Friday, July 21, 2006
Entryway



Friday, July 28, 2006
Entryway--Basement

FOCUS ON MISSOULA COUNTY PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

*By Christina Marchand, Outreach Coordinator
Innovations in American Government Program*

Montana's Blackfoot River watershed in Missoula County was honored with a \$100,000 Innovations in American Government Award from the Ash Institute at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The Innovations Award, a premier US public-sector award, is given annually to examples of creative and effective government at its best.

The Blackfoot Challenge was recognized for the work done through a spirit of cooperation among 660 private landowners, industry and government. Since its inception in 1993, more than 140,000 acres of private land have been protected; 38 miles of streams, 2,600 acres of wetland and 2,300 acres of native grasslands have been restored; and fish number increased by more than 500%. The Blackfoot Challenge is one of 30 grass roots conservation programs run by regional offices of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Harvard University invites new applications for Innovations in American Government Awards. All levels of government are eligible to apply. Each winner will receive \$100,000 to support replication and dissemination activities.

For applications and additional information go to: www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu. Applications are due September 12, 2006.

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COUNTY NEWS

COUNTY OFFICIALS

GALLATIN COUNTY's new chief administrative officer is Earl Mathers from Fredericksburg, Virginia. He will begin his work on September 5.

FLATHEAD COUNTY is seeking an IT Director with BS degree in computer science or related field, three years of progressively responsible computer system and work experience or an equivalent combination. Closing date: 08/18/06. Go to: www.co.flathead.mt.us

LAW ENFORCEMENT COURTS

GLACIER COUNTY voters passed a levy for a new jail. Previously, votes failed in 1996, 2002, and 2004. The current jail was built in 1937.

GALLATIN COUNTY's halfway house requires former criminals to volunteer 65 hours in the community before release.

CARBON COUNTY has had dramatic increases in the number of arrests in civil or criminal

cases. There were more cases by the end of March than the total 60 cases in 2005. Meth is involved in over 1/4 of the felony cases.

RAVALLI COUNTY juvenile crimes have decreased by 100 cases for each of the last three years, despite increases in the at-risk youth population. Youth Court and Probation credit a multifaceted approach which includes graduated sanctions and community diversionary programs with community service and extracurricular activities.

FLATHEAD COUNTY jail inmate populations fell to the lowest point in the last four years. An evaluation identified that 99% of those in jail were awaiting trial and had not been convicted. The County formed a criminal justice council to streamline the system.

VARIETY

GALLATIN COUNTY closed its 100-acre regional park to the public for at least a year to stop

further destruction from people who have turned the undeveloped park into an ATV / 4-wheeler playground.

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE

Community Hospital launched the first Montana health record-keeping website for area residents. Individuals will create a free personal health record and carry cards that allow secure information to be shared with medical service providers.

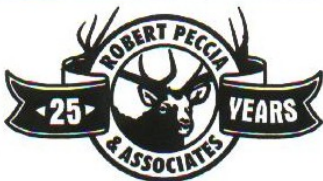
JEFFERSON COUNTY proposed rules to differentiate which areas of landfills would be available to salvagers.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY Attorney's employees (3) turned in \$1,000 worth of quarters found on the ground by a tree in front of a bank.

DAWSON COUNTY is considering the legalities of centralizing all county polling places in one location to address ADA requirements and the cumbersome new voting equipment.

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PROTECTING YOUNG EMPLOYEES

*Submitted by Emelia McEwen
MACo Assistant Risk Manager*

Although young workers provide a necessary and inexpensive labor force, their inexperience and lack of training can often result in costly injuries.

The OSHA *Teen Summer Job Safety Campaign* is a multiyear project to increase awareness about workplace hazards, and to provide possible solutions to those hazards. The campaign will focus on industries in which young people are likely to work during their high school and college years.

YOUNG EMPLOYEES AND ERGONOMICS

While employers may think of an ergonomic injury as something that occurs gradually to older workers, even temporary, summer employees are at risk.

'Ergonomics' is a term that young employees have learned through the media, and they think it really only has to do with people who work with computers. So, we need to talk in terms of proper lifting and handling, using simple definitions that relate to ergonomics.

Employers in industries in which teenage employees are likely to find jobs should take steps to make sure workers are safe from musculoskeletal disorders.

For example, food services and eating and drinking businesses employ 11.6 million people in the United States. Nearly 30% of these employees are under 20 years of age. Many

teenagers' first work experience is in the food service industry.

While food service businesses post the typical safety hazards such as slips, falls, cuts and burns, teenagers are also at risk for serious back and neck injuries. Serving food and busing tables, especially while assuming awkward postures, may lead to back, neck and shoulder strains and sprains. Specific potential hazards include balancing or lifting too many plates or glasses while serving or clearing tables, lifting heavy trays or containers of dirty dishes above shoulder height, and repetitive reaching across tables to serve customers or to clear tables.

Employers should protect their teen-workers by teaching them to:

**** Avoid awkward postures if they must carry trays, plates or beverages.** Serving with awkward postures -- such as unsupported elbow and finger postures -- can increase the risk for injury.

**** Limit the number of plates or items they carry.** Carrying more than a couple of items puts excessive strain on the arms and back, and may lead to injury.

**** Use both hands to carry items such as coffee pots or water jugs** and carry them with the elbows close to the body.

**** Move the glass or cup close to the body when pouring**, rather than overreaching with a heavy coffee pot or water jug to fill a glass.

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NACo INFORMATION

NACo Launches Personalized E-mail Update Service to Improve Communication with County Officials

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has launched a new e-mail update service on its Web site that makes it easier for county officials and other Web site visitors to stay on top of the latest news and information for counties.

NACo (www.naco.org) recently launched the GovDelivery e-mail subscription management service that sends e-mail updates whenever new information is posted on its Web site. Web site visitors can sign up for updates by clicking on the "Personalized E-mail Update: eSubscribe" icon on the homepage or on one of the many "E-mail Update" icons located throughout the site.

County officials and other Web site visitors can choose from nearly 50 update topics, including:

- Cost Saving Programs for Counties
- Conferences and Events
- Jobs Online
- Awards
- Training and Technical Assistance
- News Releases
- Library Resources (Publications, Surveys, Model County Programs)

"As the only national organization representing county governments, our goal is to reach as many county officials as we can with the information they need to effectively do their jobs," says Larry Naake, NACo Executive Director. "With 64 million Americans checking their e-mail daily, the new e-mail subscription management service we offer is the best way to proactively communicate with county officials and make our services more accessible to everyone."

The new e-mail subscription management service is provided by Minnesota-based GovDelivery, Inc., (www.govdelivery.com), the world's leading provider of government-to-citizen e-mail and wireless communication solutions designed specifically for the public sector.

WESTERN COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP FORUM

Submitted by Harold Blattie from the NACo Leadership Letter

County officials from eight counties in Colorado, Idaho and Montana attended the Western Community Stewardship Forum in Grand Junction, Colorado. Montana's Lake County and Missoula County participated.

The Forum is a partnership between NACo and the Sonoran Institute, which helps fast-growing Western counties address the increasing need for innovative solutions to land-use issues. This year's workshop focused on "the balance between the protection of cultural and natural resources and economic growth."

Between 1999 and 2006, thirteen other Montana counties have participated in the forum: Beaverhead, Cascade, Carbon, Flathead, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Park, Ravalli, Stillwater, Teton, and Yellowstone.

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Water Policy & Law Symposium

**Bozeman, Montana
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For the agenda, registration details and brochure, go to <http://water.montana.edu/policy>.

Digital Government Summit

**Helena, Montana
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This event is for and about state and local government. The purpose of the event is to foster discussion and dialogue on the use of information technology as a strategic tool for managers, ex-ecutives and policy makers.

- New Technologies
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- Policies and Standards

More information: <http://www.govtech.net/events/index.php/MontanaDGS2006>

This event is complimentary for government employees but you must register to attend at <https://secure.erepublic.com/events/index.php/MontanaDGS2006/register>

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